The Groundplane

SBARA SOUTH BAY AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
ARRL Member Club Since 1974

Join SBARA members for a pre-meeting social dinner at Sweet Tomatoes.
Time: 6:00PM — Date: September 9th. — Address: Gateway Plaza - Corner of Paseo Padre and Walnut

August 2005
Volume 6 Issue 9

President's Message — By Al Rendon WT6K

As I write this month's message I am listening to the Saturn Disaster net on 14.265MHz and realize how helpful amateur radio operators are in time of need. Katrina has focused the entire country on the necessity of being prepared as individuals and the critical nature of immediate response by the authorities to major disasters. This unfortunate event is clearly an opportunity to show the importance of amateur radio during a disaster and I know that there will be many stories of how amateur radio supported and helped in the aftermath of Katrina. You can read Jim Haynie's W5JBP, President of the ARRL, letter to the amateur radio community regarding our role in helping where needed.

To illustrate how you all give of your time when needed and practice you radio skills, I want to point to the sixteen SBARA members who worked multiple shifts at this year's Hayward Zucchini Festival. In this case it is not an emergency but it serves an important purpose to the community and SBARA financially. To those of you who said 'yes' when asked I thank you from the bottom of my heart. This has turned out to be the major fundraiser for SBARA so next year please consider giving of your time and work a shift to support your amateur radio association.

As mentioned last month we are planning a SBARA Spaghetti Dinner for the October meeting at the Veteran's Hall. It will be a social night for all the family with no SBARA meeting or presentation. It should be lots of fun. Please plan to attend with the spouse and children. We are looking for a big turnout like we had at last year's December Holiday dinner. The menu will include a wonderful tossed green salad and garlic bread to complement the spaghetti. Jim Wood will be our cook and I can tell you from personal experience that his food is delicious. Price will be around $10 for adults and $5 for children under 12 years old. Mark you calendar for October 14th, 6:00PM at the Veterans Building in Niles. Buy your ticket at the September meeting or by contacting Al Rendon wt6k@arrl.net (510) 656-2427.

Finally, some of you did not receive the e-mail notification last month and I want to apologize for the problem. I was traveling out of town and attempted to send it from my mother's home and I encountered technical difficulties. Our Webmaster Tony AB6BR has fixed the problem so it shouldn't happen again.

Hope to hear you on the air this month.

73, Al Rendon -WT6K

September Program

"The Tools and Tactics of Transmitter Hunting"

Join your fellow SBARA members on September 9th to hear Don Ferguson

(cont'd. on page 2)

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Special points of interest:

- Open Letter to Fellow Hams
- Zucchini Festival
- Go Pack

Operational and Event News

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
September 9th	7:30PM	SBARA General Meeting
October 14th	6:00PM	SBARA Family Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser – Everyone Come!
October 14th—16th		Pacificon 2005
November 4th	7:30PM	SBARA Board Meeting — Al Rendon's Home
November 11th	7:30PM	SBARA General Meeting
December 9th	6:00PM	SBARA Annual Holiday Dinner

PACIFICON 05
SAN RAMON CA
AMATEUR RADIO CONVENTION

PACIFICON 2005 October 14, 15, and 16th.

Details at http://www.pacificon.org/

September Program (cont'd.)

(from page 1)

KD6IRE explain the various tools and techniques used in locating radio signals. He will also talk about the Tactics applied in different types of radio signal location tracking. For those interested, Don will also review the regular transmitter hunts available in the Fremont and San Francisco Bay area. This topic is valuable to all ham radio operators for recreation and for emergency services. Don is President of 'Project Oscar' and had an illustrious career with IBM. Come and listen to this excellent speaker share his knowledge regarding this exciting area of amateur radio.

My fellow Amateur Radio Operators — Jim Haynie, W5JBP President ARRL

There is no doubt that the recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina will be the largest and longest emergency actions that hams have ever undertaken. It will also be one of the hardest, not simply due to the large areas involved, but also because many of us have friends and relatives directly impacted by this catastrophe. For them, and all the people of the Gulf region, we ask divine aid and comfort in this time of sorrows.

But we are also hardened and resolved to turn this event into one of the most glorious opportunities to show the unique attributes of ham radio - it works! You know that. We can again show the world that we have the best trained, most ingenious and dedicated ARES and RACES operators ever in history. We have the attention of the world press, and we will show what ham radio can do.

This will not happen in a week, not even in a month. The recovery efforts will be drawn out over numerous states and are expected to go well into the winter. Hams will grow weary and need relief and replacement from all across America. The ARRL, the national association for Amateur Radio, is already working on strategic plans to make it possible for these volunteers to come. Our goal is to provide the SEC's with all the support we can muster and allow them to do their jobs.

There is a curious coincidence in the fact that the United Technologies grant, which allowed the ARRL to train so many thousands of hams in emergency communications, ends this week. Now we are seeing the results of that effort. Disciplined hams, using correct procedures have already saved many lives, and will save hundreds more by providing timely, accurate and critical communications to our served agencies. To the students, mentors, organizers, funders and teachers of those courses we can only say, "Well done!"

I know many people would like to move NOW please don't. I know many of you want to enter the fray, come to the coast and get involved. Please, not yet. Instead, get yourself ready. Refresh your skills and knowledge of protocols and procedures. Once the agencies are able to complete a preliminary needs assessment, we will know who is needed and where. For now, the area is simply too dangerous and no one is being allowed in. Transportation and logistics, including volunteer groups coming in, must be done in an orderly manner or we may only add to the chaos and confusion. Information and coordination for such a historically large response is being developed and will be made available soon. But for now, work through your SEC's and follow their lead. I would also ask that you be professional and disciplined whenever checking into an HF net. Net control is a difficult job at best, so be respectful. If you have traffic fine, but if not, please stand by.

There is already no doubt that when the history of this event is written, the role of Amateur Radio will be one of honor. Unpaid volunteers who came through for their country and communities when all other systems failed or were overwhelmed. By working together and mutually supporting each other, we can perhaps give these very dark days a small glint of glory. Let these be the days that hams, decades from now, remember with pride. Together we can - and will - make it happen because, after all, we are HAMS.

September Raffle News — By Gene Arrillaga — KG6ZYD

"Those shopping for a wide variety of advanced features in an economically priced 2 meter mobile will find the ICOM IC-2100H worthy of serious consideration." QST, 1/99 Features include: 55W of transmit power with 3 power levels to choose from 50W, 10W and 5W. Additional information can be found at the ICOM web site- http://www.icomamerica.com/products/amateur/2100h/ There will be other additional prizes as warranted.

Where did the Summer Go? — By Don Gintel — KG6SBE

For those of you that could not make the August meeting here are the highlights.

Sam Severs WS6S started off the meeting with approximately 33 members and guests asked for some volunteers for the Zucchini Festival, which was August 20th, and 21st 20005 a sign-in sheet went around the room for sign-ups. I worked the main gate on Saturday and had a blast. Please keep in mind for next year when the sign-up sheet goes around.

Sam opened the meeting up with the Home Brew Table the following members presented their talks from antennas to power supplies. W6RK- Risto Kotalampi, N6BFO- Ted Cameron, W6EEP Mike Studer, and WS6S Sam Severs. All the information that was presented was very informative. On to the raffle:

First Prize was a Yaesu FT-2800M won by Ernie Anaya KF6FFE, this man is a lucky man. As you may know Ernie has won a few times. But as I always say you have to pay to play. Word of advise at the September meeting go up and shake Ernie's hand then buy the raffle tickets Ernie will never know what hit him.

Second Prize was a Hints and Kinks Book won by Kris Berry KG6NUU. I am about to put Kris and his mom in the Ernie group.

Third Prize was a 2005/06 Repeater Directory won by Annette Berry yes its Kris's mom.

And the Last Prize of the evening was Zucchini Festival tickets won by Joe Colouch; I hope you have a fun time.

This newsletter will be in your hands before the September 9, 2005 meeting. This is a heads up notice that at this meeting we will be selling tickets for the upcoming Spaghetti Dinner, which will be held on **October 14, 2005** at the Veterans Hall in Niles. I have also just learned that renown chief Jim Wood KE6IVA will be making his famous Spaghetti and meat sauce, this dish is known through out the Ham Radio League family, so don't miss out. Mark your calendar for October 14, 2005.

Hayward Zucchini Festival — By Jonathan Lassoff - KG6THI

Before I start out, I would like to say that perhaps I might sound a bit negative about volunteering at the Hayward Zucchini Festival, but it was just a lot of work. It was god fun that I would recommend to any ham.

When I arrived at the Hayward Zucchini festival to volunteer for communications, I wasn't sure what to expect this year. I figured it would be about the same as the one shift I worked last year: a couple of messages to request ice or drinks at a booth, but otherwise just a nice day in the park. This year was a tad more complicated. I started out the morning at 9:30 when I got to the park and took a position at the McConahey gate. It was just a gate that was really for cars to go through during setup and tear-down, but functioned as a pedestrian entrance on Hesperian Blvd. as well. Each of the posts had a manila folder with our instructions as to what to do. Pretty simple really, use a tactical call sign and just call net control when we needed something. What wasn't in the instructions was that the folks working directly with the Zucchini festival in the booths thought that somehow we were supposed to act in a security position by watching the booths in case they were robbed. I didn't really have a problem with it, but I really thought I was just passing traffic over the radio should anything arise. Then, when I was done with my shift around 2:15 PM, Mike Fung, WA6AWI said that I was signed up until 7:30PM! I was only really expecting to work in the midday from 9:30 to 2:15 both days, but somehow I had picked up two extra shifts. I didn't really have much else planned that weekend, and there weren't extra people to fill the slot, so I figured I would work the extra shifts anyway. So, around midday I picked up working at the administration tent as net control from Andy Romeril (KG6MDS). Net control was an entirely different can of worms than was just having a nice seat and the Extra Class license manual (a really gripping read, I highly recommend it!) at the McConahey gate.

It was then that I really discovered the special joy of working with GMRS radios. There were two nets going at once at the festival. One was on FRS/GMRS channel 2 with a 110.9 Hz CTCSS tone. This net was all the pedestrian gate entrances as well as a couple rovers and Mike Fung and Bryan in supervisory roles, and net control at the administration tent. The other net was running on GMRS/FRS channel 5 with the same CTCSS tone! This caused some interesting problems at the administration tent. The net on channel 2, with our SBARA volunteers (with REAL directed net procedures, hihi), had a handheld GMRS radio that put out a watt or two (I forget, ask Mike), was connected by a length of coax to a homebrew GMRS J-pole on one of the supports of the administration tent, up about 15 feet or so. The other net on channel 5 had all the ice and beverage carts as well as electricians. They did all the real work, and were dispatched from the other side of the administration tent with a similar setup. They ran the same GMRS radio, but with a Groundplane at the same height as the J-pole. One of the problems with this setup was that whenever I keyed the transmitter, the power gain from the J-pole would effectively overpower the front ends of the other radio in the administration tent with the same CTCSS tone! This was quite a hassle as I tried not to interfere, but couldn't help but double with some of the other stations occasionally. This wasn't too bad of a problem, but I kept hearing stations double on our net, and the timing never led me to believe that it was any of our stations. So I grabbed the HT out of my backpack and tuned to the frequency that we were using and found some

(cont'd. on page 6)

Hayward Zucchini Festival (cont'd.) — By Jonathan Lassoff - KG6THI

FRS activity with a 131.8 Hz CTCSS tone. Doh! I guess we hadn't thought to use a non GMRS and FRS shared frequency to prevent QRM. On top of this, most of the operators on our net were used to reasonably quick PTT circuits and good squelch. Unfortunately, the FRS/GMRS radios we were using had really crumby squelch. It got even worse than that; sometimes after long periods of use, the PLL would unlock and drift just a little. Because the specifications for the FRS and GMRS services is pretty stringent as far as frequency stability goes, the default action of the radio was to of course shut of the transmitter. What a hassle that got to be. At the end of Saturday, we figured that we should switch the net frequency up to GMRS-only frequencies. This seemed to solve the problem of the FRS QRM on the net.

On Sunday evening, things got a bit more interesting. I was net control again during the morning shift and everything was peachy as ever until about 12:30 when a fight broke out at the main gate. Of course two stations at once wanted to tell the administration tent about it, and so all I got out that annoying heterodyning noise was, "fight at the main gate". I got to the "main gate" station and got the message over to administration, but the Hayward Police Dept. was being paid to oversee the whole thing, and they were there pretty quick. Things were nice and quiet until the festival started to come to a close. I started to work back at the McConahey gate, and it seemed like all the vendors wanted to pack up and go home before the official closing time came. The instruction that I got was that no vehicles could enter until 7:30 when the festival ended. I probably turned away 20-30 people wanting to just load up and go home. Their request seemed pretty reasonable to me, and I didn't feel very nice telling them to bugger off.

Some folks were getting pretty adamant about opening the gates, but we couldn't let them. Finally Mike Fung came and helped out, what a relief. Finally all the cars were allowed to go through, and I was done for the day. It was then that I noticed something interesting on my HT on FRS channel 1. Just a repeating sequence of three of the same tones. The carrier was an S9+ on my HT (although I have doubts about the S-meter's accuracy), so I figured it must be close in, as it was a S4 with just the base loading coil on my antenna. So, it became an impromptu fox hunt! There is only so much you can do with body fade, but at low UHF frequencies, I found that my torso attenuated the signal pretty well. At 462 MHz, reflections are minimal, so it seemed pretty easy. I was sure that I located the signal at one vendor's booth that was away from any others, but they were already packed up and gone. Hmmm, I took a look around and asked a couple of nearby booths if they had any idea as to what the tones might be, but no one had a clue. Listening more closely, I could hear some faint voices under the tones. I finally guessed that it was probably just a call button on some consumer FRS HT that made the tones to signal other stations. It did have a 88.5 Hz CTCSS tone, so I figured that that wasn't too eccentric of a guess.

When I got back to the administration tent to turn in my radio, it was a bit later, and everything was over at this point. And then, one woman coming from a concession booth said that she had inadvertently left some merchandise at her booth, and was wondering if someone could get it. What a perfect chance to finally ride one of those electric golf carts. Boy those are sure fun to drive, and a fun ending to an interesting weekend.

(Cont'd on page 7)

Hayward Zucchini Festival (cont'd.) — By Jonathan Lassoff - KG6THI

Key Learning's:

* Public service events are fun, and this one is great because it raises a lot of money for the club!
* FRS/GMRS users on the same simplex channel can't tell when they might be causing QRM because of tone squelch on their radios.
* Speaking clearly and at a reasonable speed during a directed net is very important.
* Key the PTT long enough to ensure that the station being called has enough time to have their squelch open. This is particularly important with the FRS/GMRS radios, whose squelch really sucked.
* Practicing a directed or controlled net is important for emergency communications. I haven't done any work with ARES, RACES, or CERTcomm, but if this is what it was like at a festival, I could only imagine what it is like during a disaster. I'm pretty unqualified to suggest this, but what about something like a monthly traffic handling race? Something like a contest to see what team can handle the most messages properly the fastest over different modes. I think that would be fun.
* Holding "ergonomic" HTs upside down with the antenna parallel to your arm really hurts propagation. This was really common among stations on the other net because the shape of the HTs we were using (some Midland model) had a shape that was conducive to holding it upside down.

And one the funnier lines on the net Saturday morning from Adam Ferriante (KG6HDR) to net control, "Your 5 over 9 here into Hayward, California. Good DX old man."

On a side note, I'll be setting up a club station at my school in Santa Barbara county, and I'm seeing about getting a club call. Let me know if you'd like to try a sked; I'm working on the CW speed. :)

See you on the bands!
73, Jonathan - KG6THI (jlassoff@gmail.com)

Preparing a 72 hour "Go Pack"

There are many types of disasters: floods, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and tornadoes. It is estimated that after a major disaster, it may take up to three days for relief workers to reach some areas. It would be wise to consider a Go Pack that you could live on for 7-10 days. In such a case, If you live in a disaster prone area a 72-hour kit is the minimum you should have available. Plan your go pack accordingly to your families' size.

Details can be found at — http://www.nationalterroralert.com/readyguide/72hourkit.htm

Bill — WB9YVM
Newsletter Editor

Handy Web Links

SBARA Web Site	http://www.qsl.net/sbara
ARRL Main Site	http://www.arrl.org/
ARRL SCV Division	http://www.arrl.org/sections/SCV.html
ARRL East Bay Section	http://www.pdarrl.org/ebsec/index.html
ARRL Contest Page	http://www.arrl.orgcontests
Contest Calendar	http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal
Callsign Lookup (QRZ)	http://www.qrz.com/
Vanity Callsign Info	http://www.vanityhq.com/
IRLP Main Page	http://www.irlp.net/
AMSAT	http://www.amsat.org/
FCC Services	http://wireless.fcc.gov/services/amateur

SBARA on the Internet at

http://www.qsl.net/sbara

On the Air at 147.015 + PL 103.5

Fremont Repeaters & Net Information

WA6PWW -	147.015 +600Khz, PL 103.5
WA6PWW -	223.900 -500Khz, PL 107.2
WA6PWW -	442.600 +5Mhz, PL 107.2
N6OXR -	146.94 -600Khz, PL 123.0
N6OXR -	441.525 +5Mhz, PL 123.0
ARES -	Tuesday @ 7:30pm - 147.015 + PL 103.5

Groundplane SBARA Newsletter *Copyright 2005 SBARA*

The Groundplane is published monthly by the South Bay Amateur Radio Association. Articles and letters are always welcome. The normal deadline for material is six days prior to the end of the previous month. Articles can be sent by email to hamradio@comcast.net or via U.S. Mail. Contact the Editor for details and submission guidelines. The opinions expressed in the Groundplane are strictly those of the authors.

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The Ground Plane

SBARA monthly meeting:

September 9th, 2005

at the Veterans Hall in the

Niles District

Meeting Details in this Issue

At 6:00PM prior to the September 9th SBARA meeting we will be dining at Sweet Tomatoes. Join your fellow SBARA members for a social meal.

— Details Inside

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